

# Dissent in historical society

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DUXBURY — A group within the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society that has pushed for a more open organization is negotiating a compromise with the society's executive board.



Lord

Members for an Open Society formed last summer after members of the historical society questioned some executive board decisions and the reason for their closed-door meetings.

The society's goal is to preserve the town's historical and natural resources and encourage awareness of the area's heritage, according to

## Closed-door meetings questioned

### Duxbury

its mission statement. President Judy Hall said the organization has about 975 members.

Frank Lord heads Members for an Open Society, which he said includes hundreds of people who have expressed concern about the operation of the historical society.

Lord is part of the steering committee, which also includes Walter Kopke, Molly Matson and Frances Leach, and is chairman of the society's education committee.

"Our intention is to try and inform the rest of the association of what our concerns are," Lord said.

Lord said last week that the open society may be on the verge of a compromise with the historical society's executive board. The steering committee is meeting tonight to discuss a proposal suggested by an executive board member.

Hall said the executive board nominating committee would be willing to discuss the proposal, which is to form a joint slate with Lord's group for the society's Jan. 21 election. The open positions include president, treasurer, clerk, one of the two vice presidents and several members at large, Lord said.

The groups would together choose candidates for the slate and select their own candidates for the positions they do not agree on, Lord said.

"Which is really the objective we've been trying to get at — open and choice," Lord said.

Hall said she is eager for the two groups to make amends.

"Having a dissenting group is very detrimental to the society. We would like to resolve our differences," Hall said.

The open society had scheduled an informational meeting for Jan. 7 at the library to discuss their concerns and present their own slate and platform. Lord said the group would still have the meeting but with a different focus, if they accept the compromise.

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# More openness urged in historical society

## ■ SOCIETY

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"We've tried to be very communicative, but there's always room for improvement in any organization," Hall said.

Lord said he first questioned the historical society's meeting policy in the spring when his request for an open meeting was refused. Lord said he was frustrated that the former director had been fired the day she was scheduled to speak at an education committee event. Lord said he wanted to discuss improving communications between members but was told board meetings are not open to the public.

Hall said the organization is private and does not have an obligation to hold open meetings. She said the organization is registered with the state Division of Public Charities because it is a non-profit group.

Lord said he was also concerned about what he called the board's lack

of planning before purchasing the Nathaniel Winsor house, which is to be used as the society's new headquarters.

Lord said Members for an Open Society have wondered why the historical society has not submitted documents for the necessary occupancy permits.

Lord said the house would also need to be made accessible to the disabled if it is going to be open to the public.

"We're concerned about the process that's been followed in the (executive board's) decision-making," Lord said.

Hall said the society has not been lax in planning for its new headquarters, but that the process for acquiring the permits is a long one.

"We've been following this very carefully and with professional advice," Hall said.

She said the next step is for the board to get state approval for the disabled access plan.